583 sufficient time to get to know his future wife and her family.
584 He treats them with the greatest consideration, and for the mother-
606 in-law (nĭ e-ngɔ̌n III, that is, the girl's mother) especially he has an enormous amount of respect. He is courtesy itself, bringing her presents, large and small, and from time to time killing a chicken or a sheep for her. In short, one could in all seriousness speak of a mother-in-law cult (see the love feast, Vol. II, p. 24). And above all: oson, oson, oson: shame, shame, and more shame. The son-in-law is unspeakably ashamed before the mother-in-law, and vice versa, she before him. This is especially true after the wedding when the good mother-in-law extends her modesty also to the members of the son-in-law's kin group. Like a thief she steals behind the dwellings into her daughter's house in order not to be seen, and -- who knows? -- perhaps in order not to give rise to mother-in-law jokes.

Riddle:

[539] [524]

ŋzɛ̌'n	e	bɔ̈nʉ̌lie,	e	ne	kaangǎ'
Way	of the	lizards,	it	is (in the)	reeds (Cyperus)

Solution:

ŋzɛ̌'n	e	bonĭ ɛ́ngɔ̄'n,	e	n'	a
Way	of the	mother-in-law,	it	is	on (the) stretch

fá́
behind the houses.

595 On the day when a man takes his young wife home, the village
● 535 celebrates with a grand dance, in which all adult showoffs do
[302] the best of their ability and which the young wife, red from red wood dye, attends as guest of honor seated on a stool. On this occasion, the popping of blunderbusses may not be omitted, because it belongs to the festive music like our flourish of trumpets. The dancing and shooting last several days when a wealthy chief has acquired a new wife or if it is the first wife of a fellow villager. There is nothing strikingly special about any of this; the festivity simply involves a series of different /262/ dances (among which the dschama is particularly popular which are also customary on other occasions.

583 to look for her, he gives them what he has in the way of money and goods, and the parents have to consent to the marriage by accepting this first payment. This practice is called abom.

584 This practice is exceptional, and the marriage proposal is generally made in a more conventional way. A man, having learned that there is a free woman in a neighboring tribe, a young girl or a repudiated wife, goes to the woman's parents and asks to see her. She comes [576] into the hut, sits down, and allows herself to be looked at. She does not speak if she has never been married, but she speaks if she is used to men; then she goes out after about an hour. Her brothers ask her opinion of the suitor and take the answer to the latter, who gives his opinion of the woman he has seen. This visit is called dzāga. If both agree to marry, they spend the night together; the man may leave in the morning without saying anything if the woman has not suited him and he does not wish to marry her. If it is the woman who is not satisfied, she asks her brothers to tell the suitor not to come back. In case of agreement, the suitor goes back several times for several days. The father of the woman fixes the amount of the dowry, and the suitor has to accept it.

586 If a married woman, not wishing to stay with her husband, goes off with another man, the latter pays the woman's parents the amount of the dowry which was paid by the former husband. This practice is fairly recent. In earlier times the former husband received the dowry of his successor directly or, if he refused it, it was a case of war unless another woman was given him in exchange.

583 595 Marriage is not considered final until the dowry has been paid in full by the husband. The amount is variable, currently about 1,500 or 2,000 francs, in money or in various goods. The woman leaves her tribe and goes to live with her husband. Her arrival at her new village is marked by celebrations. [89] She is accompanied by women who cry out "e e ke o o o ko"; these cries are called mekogo. The husband's mother recites to her the genealogy of her son; then the bride goes into her husband's hut where the women of her husband's family bring her food. She is confined here for a week, and this is the "good welcome to the bride," eyale mbom.

585 535 Two days after the arrival of the bride, there are songs and dances performed by women only: these are the bya bi mbom. The men play the tomtom and are spectators. This takes place near the husband's hut.

586 The day on which the woman is to come out of the hut, she is bathed
535 and anointed with an oil (mbon nzüi) and is seated on a stool placed in the middle of the village square. Other women sing and dance around her and give her a new name to represent a wish she has made.

There is no religious ceremony.

583 There also used to be a marriage by exchange of wives (mvole bunanga). With the mere consent of the women concerned, two men could exchange their wives. The parents of the wives did not interfere except to verify the amounts of the dowries and to make sure that the husband of the wife with the lesser dowry had fully paid the difference to the other.

593 The relations between married couples are simple: the man must
562 lodge his wife and clear the brush from the site where she will make her plantings; on the other hand, the wife owes absolute fidelity and obedience to her husband, who has the right to beat her. The woman has no authority in the household; she is hardly more respected than
[833] a domestic animal; she owns in her own right only the cooking utensils and the tools for planting and fishing, and does not have the right to own animals. Prohibition of sexual relations is rigidly observed during
[834] pregnancy, during lactation, and in the night preceding departure for the hunt, work at the forge, and various [other] tasks. If the prohibition were not observed, these tasks would be unsuccessful.

595 Polygamy is the present custom among the Fan. The first wife has authority over the others, who must obey her. She receives the largest share of everything and assigns household chores and field work. The husband sleeps with each of his wives for three days.

684 In adultery, only the wife is punished. She is beaten and her ac-
827 complice pays an indemnity to her husband. This indemnity amounts to a quarter of the dowry. The wife confesses her adultery only when forced to by a series of corporal punishments which range from blows to being tied to a tree full of ants (akokum).

586 Repudiation is accomplished without difficulty: the man sends back his wife and the dowry is repaid him. The causes for repudiation are repeated adultery, the death of a child as a result of adultery, laziness, practice of fetishism, and excessive surveillance of the husband; sterility is not a reason for [90] repudiation. The children stay with the husband, and the woman, once repudiated, may remarry.

794 one – tends to re-establish this elementary order, it is a rein-
769 statement, a pledge of fertility and power. Apparently the Ngil
[171] resembles a great many other "associations" that have existed in Gabon, especially the Mwiri of the Ngounié people. (2) It con-

2. Cf. A. Maclatchy, "Organisation sociale des populations de la region de Mimongo [Social Organization of the Peoples of the Mimongo Region]," Bulletin de l'Institut d'Etudes Centrafricaines, I, I, 1945.

stitutes primarily an instrument of struggle against the sorcerers (böyêm), to the extent that they attempt to interfere with the normal order. But it is much more than that: it is the indication of a power superior to that based on kinship, a grouping with a great capacity for control (doubtless the most powerful).

794 The Fang have known other associations of men with specialized functions – or rather those that create "specialists," such as the akûm, who directs the ceremonies linked with the male dance called makuma. The akûm, who appears also as a sort of chronicler-singer, intervening especially at the time of [847] funerals and affairs concerning fertility (search for the "sorcerer" responsible for an abortion that might result in permanent sterility, (3)

3. Cf. E. Trezenem, op. cit., p. 79.

ceremonial intended to lift the incest which creates sterile marriages). The akûm in daily life is distinguished from the non-initiates by being subject to a number of special interdicts. He is a "respected, or rather a feared, person," for to him is sttributed "great power." "In order to reach this situation he must have been [535 taught by another akûm; he must have learned the interminable 674] songs that last a whole night long, and then with his own hand kill one of his close relatives...." (4) This brief description is

4. Father L. Martrou, "Les Éki

562 789 her husband. The "son-in-law" and the "mother-in-law" are bound together by a system of interdicts; the mwanõ are required [606] to show respect to the "generation of the mothers"; the pre-eminence attached to seniority plays a role in the relations between the sexes. The woman may therefore be the object of respect and the subject of fear. [151] On the other hand, "associa-562 795 tions" of women which have created a hierarchy, a teaching, a ritual of initiation, and a whole body of distinguishing symbols and signs and a technique shown by a specific dance, are referred to in various documents, particularly the Mévungõ (1), which is

1. Unpublished documents collected by Abbot A. Walker, a native of Lower Gabon and truly versed in local ethnology.

a Pahouin version of the Nyèmbé, a widely disseminated female sect in Gabon. This sect was observed by Du Chaillu about 1860 among the Ba-kélé who were for the most part subdued by the Fang. This observer wrote at that time that the Nyèmbé "protects the women from their male enemies, it avenges their grievances, and serves them in all circumstances according to their whims."(2)

2. Father du Chaillu, op. cit., p. 322 ff.

This points out with great subtlety, to the essentially compensatory role played by such a grouping. By participating in the "society of women," the woman remedies the marginal situation and the submission which are her share throughout her daily life. It imposes or necessitates her collaboration in important moments for the community and in domains which in principle are forbidden to her. [535] Thus the dance of the Mévungõ was used "long ago when a Pahouin tribe was preparing to wage war against another tribe or to make raids for women"; it was also used "at the time of preparation for great elephant hunts." (3) Such "associations" no longer survive

3. Abbot A. Walker, notes inédites [unpublished notes].

533 skits, often satirical, sometimes to the accompaniment of European tunes that have been adapted to the instrument. Choral song, finally, is very popular, using imported tunes that are often considerably improved by the native interpretation which makes extensive use of fugue and counterpoint. Unfortunately, these modern airs are not suited to the tonal system of the language, which they tend to impair when words are adapted to them.

538 173 827 Chronicles, minkaffete, of which the salutations, mebatan, were in a way summaries, were part of traditional training and were recited only on solemn occasions. They are falling into oblivion because of the considerable demands they made upon the memory and because of the time necessary for learning them by heart, without mentioning the fact that they contained incomprehensible passages, perhaps borrowed from tribes that were neighbors of the Pahouin before their great migration. /126/

177 538 The systems of transcription introduced by missionaries were first used to translate the Scriptures and to compose hymns, which have not always had a good effect upon the language but have nonetheless become classics in spite of the mistakes and improprieties they often contain. After these works produced by Europeans in the native language, there have appeared in rapid succession works composed by Pahouin writing in their own language. The most remarkable is without doubt Nnanga kôn by the Boulou, Jemba Medu, which describes Boulou life at the time of the arrival of the first white men (nnanga kôn = phanrom albino). This, to my knowledge, is the only novel composed in one of the languages of the group; its popularity is prodigious, to such a degree that its characters have entered into contemporary Boulou folklore.

There is a missionary press in Gabon and in the Cameroons. The papers with the largest circulation are Nleb Bekristen (Christians' Guide) (Ewôndo, Catholic) and Mefoé (News) (Boulou, Protestant), which is read as far afield as Gabon. The lay press in French is not of much importance and its publications moreover are usually short lived.

538 A Pahouin literature in the French language is a recent — and significant — phenomenon. Oyono and Eza Boto-Mongo Beti are both from the Cameroons; neither Gabon nor Spanish Guinea have up to now produced a novelist.

535 The dance has lost a great deal in being deprived of its old ritual character. Formerly there was a specific dance for every ceremony,

535 rite, and event in life, of which the orchestral element as well as the dance movements and costumes had a very precise symbolical meaning. Many of these dances have died out, either because they have lost their raison d'être (as with war and initiation dances, etc.) or because they have been prohibited by the administration and especially by the missions as obscene or pagan (fertility, funeral, medical dances, etc.). Those that survive have now a recreational or purely artistic character, which was only secondary before. It is 562 significant that the number of dances in which both sexes take part 178 has considerably increased and that nearly all are now open to the public and may be seen by spectators of any age or sex.

In spite of this falling off, there is still a large number and variety of dances. Among the most widespread may be mentioned:

ôzila, an old fertility dance, especially among the Fang and 534 Ntoumou; an orchestra of vertical drums, mbae and ngom, with "spoken" accompaniment of the drum-telephone, nkul; it is danced by professionals (women initiates of mevungu?) with bare torso, vegetable rattles at the ankles, unsewn wildcatskin skirts, wooden masks on the left arm; the leading dancer, ôsua njem, inserts a horn into her vagina during the dance; the dancers 276 apparently drug themselves with a decoction containing (notably) Indian hemp; the missions have forbidden this dance, and this has provoked several incidents.

menjañ, called thus because the dance is accompanied by an orchestra of balafos; it is widespread except, perhaps, among the Boulou; it is performed by the young girls and little girls of a village; each village has its own tune and special costume consisting of a belt of raffia fiber, skirt and cap in "pastry-cook" style in the village colors, with a brassière worn in Christian villages.

535 ényengé, sometimes called njeman fulutita, a Protestant dance 177 (it must have been inspired by Swedish gymnastics used by a German-American M. P. A. /American Presbyterian mission?/ missionary to provide a substitute for "immoral" dances; si non è vero...), found especially among the Boulou but extending into northern Gabon under the aegis of the Movement for Regrouping Pahouin; it is a dance performed by young women and girls with a male leader, nlebe njeman, who conducts with a whistle; an orchestra of drums, nkul, mbae, and ngom, rattles

535 177 and flutes; chorus sung by the dancers; white dresses, a uniform headkerchief and foulard sash; the musical themes are those belonging to village, association, and clan; it is danced at civil or religious festivals, mebɔ̂k, mevak, and at bisulan (ayoñ meetings), etc.; the words are sometimes satirical.

535 anyeñ, a men's or (more rarely) a women's dance, similar to the above, perhaps inspired by it, but more lively. The words are often obscene, the gestures scatological (in the men's version); probably of ritual origin; one of the few male dances surviving today.

akɔ̂ma mba, danced by one or two young women; a chorus of women, with the large vertical drum, mbaé; raffia fiber skirt and bare torsos; an ancient ritual (marriage?) dance; it is looked at askance by the missions and is becoming rare.

asiko, a modern mixed dance, quite erotic; no costumes; percussion instruments and rattles; a mixed chorus; it is forbidden by the missionaries.

177 In towns, European or American dances are current under the generic name "tango," although the rhythm, when they are not danced to a phonograph, is rather that of a /West Indian/ beguine, often fugual.

536 The theatre, unknown in the past, is beginning to develop, partly under the influence of youth organizations introduced from outside. At bisulan, short farces are often put on, like morality plays, or satirical sketches related to our cabaret revues, in which there is no hesitation in scoffing at the authorities.

Chapter 7

The Process of Change

1. Local Government Organs

631 177 The disintegration characteristic of Pahouin clans makes it difficult to establish a coherent organization. The conflict between the system of personal rights and that of territorial rights is clear-cut:

779 totemic ceremonies, or in even just religious ones. None may
785 be performed while the moon is dark or when it is full (ngon
821 éto ndzuge: the moon is closed). In the ceremonies at which the chief performs alone, the fast lasts three and a half days, a half lunar quarter; the fast begins at nearly full moon (nsolo ngon) and ends at full moon (nduge ngon).

IV. Totemic Dances: adzém bia dzém akhu

779 Dance plays such a large part in Fan life, as it does in
535 that of every African, that it would be very unlikely to be absent from religious and totemic life. Besides, we know that dancing has always been associated with [510] religious phenomena among all peoples and in all epochs. David danced before the Ark of the Covenant; Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans had their sacred dances; and even in our day, in quite recent times, have we not seen in Madrid the seises, the altar boys of Seville, performing their graceful dances before the blessed sacrament?

The Fan have their religious dances, and special ones for each rite. We may divide them into several clases: purely religious dances, with which we are not concerned; those that accompany totemic rites; and, finally, purely totemic dances.

Among the dances accompanying totemic rites, the principal ones are dances of sacrifice and of circumcision and mortuary dances.

779 As the name indicates, dances of sacrifice accompany all
785 sacrifices and are danced before and after, and each has it
535 characteristic features.

The dance taking place before a sacrifice is serious. The chief, then all the participants, circle slowly around the victim to a tom-tom beating out a solemn rhythm. The movements of this dance are all slow and restrained, knees are bent slightly, elbows pushed back, with hands near the hips. It is more a rhythmic march than a true dance.

The dance taking place after a sacrifice is of quite another character. The rhythm is very fast, arms are raised into the air,

779
782 legs are flung to right and left alternately; two very lively steps,
●535 a pause, two successive jetés to the right and left, and a swaying of the body above the hips make up this dance, which has real beauty and does not lack a certain style.

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881 The circumcision dance is entirely different. The young candidates, painted white from head to foot and dressed in gar-
535 ments of leaves, are led by the initiator before the assembled
304 participants, as soon as the preparatory rites have ended and the operation is to be performed. Grown, circumcised men stand on one side, the ritual experts in the middle, those to be circumcised [511] on the other side. The dance begins. First of all, it consists of an immense circle, which spreads out and turns around the area; then the movement quickens, hands are dropped, and each person leaps and shimmies about on his own, still keeping time, which is marked out by the tom-tom. Moreover, in spite of what appears to be disorder, one soon sees that all movements are regular, perfectly conceived and executed without a hitch, without mistake, without getting out of step. Soon sweat is pouring down the dancers' arms and legs; one after another they go back to their places; only the candidates continue and their dance turns into a spinning in almost one place, on the toes, with hands stretched horizontally. Then, suddenly, at a signal from the tom-tom, the dance stops abruptly: the young dancers rush to their places, sit down, and the operations begin.

Each time the practitioner circumcises a boy, he stands up, holding in his hand proof of the operation, then does a quick dance step consisting of a few merry leaps, to the accompaniment of a special song, which everyone sings together.

When the operations are over, the youths who have been circumcised perform a short dance intended to show their fortitude; it is of just a few steps, done any old way. Then the boys quickly return to their huts, held up by their friends.

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535 The funeral dance is much more beautiful. Far from being dignified and solemn, the fanki is exceedingly lively and complicated, representing, theoretically, the soul of the dead man leaving his body and later reaching the world of spirits.

764 The soul looks everywhere for a new dwelling; it is repulsed on
535 all sides, but at last finds its rightful place. This dance has only a distant connection with totemic performances and so we do not need to be concerned with it.

Genuinely totemic dances are infrequent and are only performed on important occasions, such as war and above all after a victory. However, they are also part of burial rites and are put on after the fanki at the death of a chief. [512]

The totemic dance expresses the link between the head [chef] of the race and his totem. It depicts the totem, sometimes in a symbolic, sometimes in a representational, manner. If, as often happens, the totem is an animal, the dance will be really lively; these are the finest examples. In addition, the dancer's talent should go to copying as closely as possible the animal's pace, habits, way of life, in a word, to mime it as accurately as possible.

I have seen some of these totemic dances performed with extraordinary skill. Out of many occasions, there was once one, among the Yemvi, whose totem is a kind of flower called mvi: the dancer, moving to a very fast tempo, first outlined the shape of the flower, imitated its appearance by gestures, by an extraordinary swaying of the hips, which involved sometimes bending so far backward that his head would touch the ground without for a second losing the rhythm; from time to time, his arms and head would sweep the ground to the right and the left with incredible swiftness. Then came the blossoming: growth from bud to flower, soon to full bloom. Finally he portrayed the symbolic covenant between the father of the race and the flower, which was brought to him by a spirit. The same dancer presented a really striking contrast between the slow, weighed down, ponderous bearing of the racial chief and the light, elusive, airy, as it were, movements of the spirit approaching, retreating, and approaching again. This entirely symbolic dance has sometimes been quite erroneously interpreted by explorers as being erotic.

When the totem is an animal, the dance is obviously much simpler and more representational. The dancer mimes an animal

779 that everyone will recognize by its gait, pace and typical
535 mannerisms; then, one by one, he will act out scenes of pursuit and capture, of alliance, finally of actual assistance. Some dancers thus acquire a great reputation, which they certainly deserve.

These totemic dances have much in common with certain character dances at which the African excels, representational dances. For example, I remember having seen the dance of the bees, of the wild boar, and of the elephant, done with truly remarkable agility and realism.

Totemic dances are distinguished above all by the fact that they are accompanied, one might say rhythmically measured, by the totemic song. Furthermore, while character dances depend to a great extent upon the dancer's inspiration, totemic dance steps are more regulated and have certain invariable features. [513]

779 A common trait of all religious dances is decency, at
535 least relative decency. They are performed only by men, and
831 women are not admitted except at circumcisions, and even then they do not mingle with the men. There is rarely any sex in them, in contrast to the purely recreational dances, especially those performed in the evening, at which at times license seems to be given to the greatest obscenity.

779 Religious dances always have a very marked quality of
831 antiquity, and the majority are very beautiful, in the precise meaning of the word.

In order to give an approximate idea of totemic dances, I have transcribed two of them which seem the most expressive, that of the flower, mvi, and that of the elephant, nzoǎ.

These dances are sung, danced, and mimed at the same time. Each note represents a tom-tom beat, a different bodily position and foot movement, whether a glissade, a leap, a heavy beat, or a rapid weaving in and out.

Totemic dance of the mvi flower:
Musical score, pp. 513-514 of text.]

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

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595
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FANG DANCE.

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516

ASSINO OR PALAVER HOUSE.

[p. 66(D)]

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

the palaver house, where he loves to sit and gossip around the log fire, or lounge on the *Ewang* (a native bed of poles).

Dancing is a favourite pastime, especially at the time of new moon, when the dance seems to have some religious significance. A Fang dance is a sight worth seeing; arrayed in long streaming armlets of dried grass, and large bunches of forest beans and molluscs shells tied around the ankles for castanets, they go through a series of rapid and graceful movements, some of which are not entirely free from obscenity. Flaming torches made of resin wrapped in plantain leaves are stuck in the ground and the drums keep up a perfect fusillade; the whole making a weird and extremely interesting spectacle. With short intervals of rest the dance usually continues throughout the night until daybreak (photo of dance shown on screen).

III.—*Clothing, Ornaments, Painting and Tattooing.*

Fang men and women usually go about bareheaded; some obtain imported straw and felt hats from the traders and are very proud of them. A red worsted night-cap sold at the factories is very popular and much worn. These head coverings are chiefly worn for ornament and not to afford protection from the sun or weather. Until the opening up of trade among the Fang people their clothing amounted to almost nothing. The men wore a waist cloth made of bark from certain trees, a strong, tough, fibrous material, and the women wore a girdle stripped from the plantain stem, with some leaves from the bush or a piece of the plantain leaf tucked through the girdle in front and passed downward, backward and upward between the limbs and fastened to the girdle behind. Very often the women wore a kind of bustle made of dried grass dyed black, or red. In sitting down the women are very careful to first arrange the bustle. The native bark cloth, the girdle and bustle, are still worn in the bush towns; the women often make the girdle of imported glass beads strung on string made from pineapple fibre, but people living in towns along the river banks wear imported cloths obtained in trade. As a general rule boys and girls run about without clothing until five or six years of age. Imported cloth is worn by both sexes and is often sewn together very skilfully and decorated with pieces of different colours. There are no recognised peculiarities of dress restricted to the subdivision of tribes. The cloth is cut out and sewed by each individual owner unless it is a trade cloth previously sewn. Cloth is usually hemmed and worn as a simple wrapper around the waist, and held in place by rolling in and tucking the upper border on itself. The upper portion of the body is not much covered by the cloth although some men and women wear it tied high up around the neck. There is no difference between the indoor and outdoor clothing. When imported needles and thread can be obtained they are used, but I have seen very skilful sewing done with a sharp piece of bamboo for a needle and thread made of pineapple fibre. Upon the death of parents, clothes descend to the children. In saluting a visitor it is not customary to remove a hat or cap, if one is being worn, or any other article of clothing.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

776 idea as the Bulu regarding two great gods. The *Zamba* of the Bulu is the *Anyambi* or *Sekôme* of the Fang, the *tata* or father of all things; and another god of less power than *Anyambi* or *Sekôme*, who lives in the forests and is so tall that he gathers fruit from the highest trees. Some of the old men and women profess to have seen this god of the forests.

[775] Fang superstition includes transmigration; a departed human soul may enter any animal dwelling on top of the earth or in it. There are spirits of health and 772 disease, also a protecting spirit belonging to a clan or tribe, in whose honour a 776 small basket is hung in the palaver house, containing portions of the skull of an albino, whenever obtainable, also portions of the skulls of a relative and a chimpanzee, human hair, nails and bones. This fetish or *biang* is called the *Biang Akamayong*. Most Fang have a cabalistic word assigned to them by the *nganga* (witch doctor), and this word is used as a prayer. During the new ●[535] moon, dances are nearly always indulged in, and the songs usually addressed to the spirits of Present and Future. Local spirits need constant propitiation; a native passing in his canoe a spot where a local spirit dwells, as a large rock, will pay his respects by casting a piece of his food into the river, or when in the forest a few stones or a piece of *mbôs* (cassava) is laid at the root of some great tree.

778 Wooden idols are not plentiful among the Fang tribes living along the rivers; they are seen more in the palaver houses of the bush-towns.

Charms.—These may be only cabalistic words, and under this head of vocal charms must be included the incantations of the *nganga* (witch doctor).

Material charms.—These are by far the most common; the belief in material charms, fetish, occupies the most prominent place in Fang religious contemplation.

Among the Fang, the English word Fetish, from the Portuguese word Feticio, is *Biang* (medicine). A Fang fetish is any material object which the *nganga* (doctor) has consecrated and made a fit abiding place for a spirit. What may be consecrated? Anything, absolutely anything; a shell, rag, stone, twig of a tree, horns, nails, etc. The horns of small antelope and large deer are filled with resins, [754] nails, human hair, faeces, etc. To bewitch a person it is necessary to give the *nganga* a piece of the hair, nail, a portion of the food or a drop of blood of the [824] person to be bewitched. A Fang is most careful if he cuts himself to see that only friends and relations approach him until the bleeding has ceased, and hair when cut is usually burnt without delay. As mentioned in the section of this 784 paper on food, every child during infancy is subjected to certain rites which 778 constitute his or her *Ebi*, prohibiting the child from eating a certain kind of food or performing a certain act. Thus far, the superstitious beliefs of the Fang and [771] Bulu are precisely similar, and I gathered from Dr. Nassau at Gaboon many facts connected with the people among whom he laboured, the Mpongwe, which showed that they also held superstitious beliefs very nearly, and in some cases precisely similar to those of the Bulu and Fang, the only difference being in the

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

places where they are going to build these respectively), large bush rat, porcupine, squirrels, die in the traps; deer, guenlin, antelope, large deer and pigs die in the pitfalls. The animals which die in the *oloe* are these. This is the *oloe*.

XVII.—*Burials.*

Death is never considered as due to natural causes. Disease followed by death is due to *evus* (witch). It is not considered unlucky to attend a dying person. The body is usually left in the house until burial. Embalming is not practised. Mourners smear white clay on their bodies and wear necklaces of pineapple fibre for one moon (month). A coffin is not used and the body is buried in the sitting posture. After burial the grave is levelled off as is the case almost throughout West Africa; the only difference between the burial of a headman and a common man is in the amount of visitors and mourning, and the quarrelling over his goods. Wives of a dead headman remain in mourning from one to three moons (months). The witch doctor, *nyengwa*, usually performs a post mortem to find the witch. I attended a post mortem on an old woman. The witch doctor ripped open the abdomen with an old rusty knife, grasped and cut away the uterus and holding it up to the crowd declared "six witches!" The crowd passed the word "six witches," and spoke the praises of the witch doctor. Relations usually continue to mourn or wail for one moon while inside the house or at work in the gardens. The most common wail is *Ô nem Ô! Ô tat Ô!* (Oh mother! Oh father!).

XVIII.—*Akôm.*

This is a dance. It is not *bieng* (medicine) nor is it *ekî*. It is, however, practised by men only. The women must not see it. The latter stay within doors, and only hear the words which the men speak outside. The men speak with artificial voices, so that the women cannot recognise who it is that is speaking. (*Fum a kobo ne bvê zie ekôt.*) To make the artificial sounds they use a membrane (*ton*) which encloses the young of the spider (*edzombôn*). This they spread over a hole (about ¾ inch diameter) near the small end of an elephant tusk (*ebeng nsek*) from 1 to 2½ feet in length, attaching it with beeswax (*ekê*) or a liquid which is obtained from a plantain stalk fresh cut. This juice is called *ekiel*. It possesses an adhesive property. The man blows on the large end of the ivory. A curious sound then issues through the membrane so that the man's voice cannot be recognised. This instrument is called *ebeng akôm*. The act of playing on the instrument is called *e kobe akôm* (*e kobe*, talk). The performer sings songs; the words are distinctly heard. He sings and all others sing responsively (*a yo bi'bengan Nnôm*).

Many songs are used in *akôm*. Here are three specimens of them:—

(1) *Bwam Nnôm kobe?* *Bwo bengo ong mot.* Who speaks any more? (i.e., Be silent, let no one speak.) Others are listening with pleasure (i.e., to the performance).